
The Examined Life -- The Creative Age -- Edition 25, July-August 2007

A free, electronic newsletter brought to you by:

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www.ExnerAssociates.com

In This Issue:

- The Creative Age
- Feel Good Stories
- Coming Events

The Creative Age

The article on brain research in last month's newsletter generated a flurry of email from readers who are also fascinated by the latest brain research results. My friend Maki called to tell me excitedly about hearing Dr. Gene Cohen speak about how we become more creative as we age. "He's written a book called *The Creative Age*." Well, that was a book I had to get right away.

Centenarians are the fastest-growing age group in America. In 1900 only 1 person in 100,000 lived to age 100. The 2000 US Census reported 1 in 5,578 for a total of 58,454. Fifteen percent of centenarians live by themselves, completely independent and more than 90% reported good health until they reached their early 90s. Cohen writes "...by the middle of the twenty-first century there could be as many as 1 million [centenarians in the US]. And, everyone who will be one hundred then is alive today." More important, many of those passing 100 are living productive and interesting lives, creating their final works the year of their death at age 103 or 107.

Friends and family have been chuckling for years at my stated wish to live to be *at least 100*. Naturally, I want to be one of those who is productive and happy right to the end. I may revise my goal to 122 now that I discovered it is the current record.

At the same time, I agree totally with Abraham Lincoln's statement "And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years." Longevity for longevity's sake is not a great goal. If we can't know how long we will live, we can do our best to make the most of our time.

Dr. Cohen is a psychologist specializing in gerontology (medicine for older folks). From studies and his own work with this population, he states 4 benefits to creativity:

1. Creativity strengthens our morale in later life.
2. Creativity contributes to physical health as we age.
3. Creativity enriches relationships.
4. Creativity is our greatest legacy.

He defines creativity as a process or an outlook, not a product, a quality that exists independent of age and time. Inspired by a dream, Cohen devised the formula $C=me^2$ (yes, it was inspired by Einstein's theory).

The formula represents: **C**reativity equals the interaction between the **M**ass of what you know multiplied by your **E**xperience in life, both your outer and inner experience, and the synergy produced by them. How do these come together in a unique way? What can you draw on that will propel you into new adventures?

Exercising our creativity is useful and important at any stage of life. And as we get older, we have fewer constraints on our time and our resources. We are also more comfortable with who we are and less concerned about others' opinions of us. This can give us the freedom to try new things and bring back earlier interests that we set aside because approval was more important than experimentation.

Grandma Moses ignored her art interests to farm and raise a family. She began embroidery at age 67 when her husband died and then switched to painting at age 78 because it was easier to do with her arthritis. She was discovered, had 15 one-woman shows in Europe, painting her last great work at the age of 101.

Here are a dozen ways to nurture your creativity:

1. Take a class in something new to you.
2. Keep a journal (to get started, see Quinn's classes in Coming Events).
3. Go camping (and invent whatever you forgot to bring).
4. Try out a new career (check www.vocationvacations.com for ideas)
5. Read a book or watch a movie with a group of friends and discuss it.
6. Look at things from a different perspective. Play with the *Creative Whack Pack* or *One Hat at a Time* decks of cards to make this easy.
7. Spend time with someone from a different generation. What do you notice?
8. Take an Artist's Date – go to a place that is unusual for you and revel in the sights and sounds. (See the Artist's Way by Julia Cameron for details.)
9. Volunteer. Make a difference.
10. Read chapter 9 of *The Creative Age* for additional ideas.

Aside from its direct benefits, boosting your creativity can increase your enjoyment of life, your relationships and your health and well being.

Somerset Maugham wrote in *The Summing Up*, "When I was young I was amazed to learn that the elder Cato (a Roman statesman) began at the age of eighty to learn Greek. I am amazed no longer. Old age is ready to undertake tasks that youth shirked because they would take too long."

Feel Good Stories

This month I have been sharing the stories of two groups of friends and one complete stranger.

I know Larry Colbert and his guide-dog Banner from my local National Speaker Association Chapter. On Friday the 13th Banner was injured and his life was saved, in part, through the quick actions of a Southwest Airlines employee. The full story is here (along with links to Banner's blog and U-tube film):

www.drivingvision.com

The Tuohys, Michael, Robin, Allie, Mikey, Shannon the dog and Spike the cat, have spent their summer driving across country in the Myeloma Mobile. They are bringing information and hope to people dealing with myeloma, cancer of the bone marrow, all over the country. I got to see them and the Myeloma Mobile when they were here in AZ

this week. Check out their blog for an amazing account in words and pictures of the accident they witnessed on the way out of town:

www.myeloma.org/MyelomaMobile/

I heard an interview with author Robert Kurson about his book *Crashing Through: A True Story of Risk, Adventure and the Man Who Dared to See*. I haven't read the book yet but I intend to. It's about Mike May, who was blinded at the age of 3. He's led a very full, adventurous and happy life. In 1999 he opted to have a procedure that could restore his sight -- but only after carefully thinking it over. Check out the website, especially the Book, Photos and Illusions pages.

crashingthrough.net

I found these real-life stories inspirational. I hope you do too.

Coming Events

Using Your Inner Wisdom to Silence Your Inner Critic

Date: Tuesday September 11

Time: 8-9 am AZ Time

Are you locked in your comfort zone? Is something keeping you from reaching your greatest potential? How well do you know your Inner Critic?

Come participate in a fun and creative exploration that will help you to identify and expand your awareness of your inner critic, practice techniques to manage it, develop methods to get in touch with your inner wisdom, and move beyond your inner critic to success.

Location:

SWC Business Enterprises
5743 E Thomas Rd, Suite #6
Scottsdale, AZ 85251

Register: Just go to this website, select my session and fill in your info
http://forms3.createforms.com/59992/form_1_1.html

Cost: No charge

Teleclass: Using Your Inner Wisdom to Silence your Inner Critic

Date: Monday 9/17 Or 10/22

Time: 5-6:30 pm AZ Time/PDT, 8-9:30 pm EDT

Group Size: 8-10 people

Fee: \$25

Are you locked in your comfort zone? Is something keeping you from reaching your greatest potential? How well do you know your Inner Critic?

Sign up, call in, and participate in a fun and creative exploration that will help you to identify and expand your awareness of your inner critic, practice techniques to manage it, develop methods to get in touch with your inner wisdom, and move beyond your inner critic to success.

To sign up, please use this [online form](#), or contact me via email: info@exnerassociates.com or phone: 602-298-1129

What is a virtual book discussion group?

Interactive, informative and fun, a virtual discussion group is just like attending an in-person book group but instead of driving, parking and making sure your hair is combed, all you need is a free hour and a phone! The discussion groups meet by phone for one hour on the dates listed above. The commitment to the group will keep you on target with the reading and the discussion will help you find ways to apply the ideas to your own work and life.

The Pathfinder: How to Choose or Change Your Career for a Lifetime of Satisfaction and Success Book Discussion

Dates: Mondays 11/12, 11/26, 12/3 & 12/10

Time: 5-6 pm AZ Time/MST, 7-8 pm EST

Group Size: 8-10 people

Fee: \$75 (Book available from amazon.com for @\$10)

Back by popular demand, *The Pathfinder*, by Nicholas Lore, has three sections:

- Living the Life You Love
- How to Get There from Here
- Designing your Future Career

In our introductory call we will discuss goals and some reading shortcuts and strategies. Then, we will read one section between each call. On the calls we will have a one-hour group discussion (via phone conference) about that section. Not only will this group get you reading, but you will also be encouraged to do as many of the exercises in the book as possible!

For more information contact me via email: info@exnerassociates.com or phone: 602-298-1129

Participants of previous Pathfinder groups said:

"I have been holding myself back from changing careers for many years and this book has shown me that making commitments to myself - in all areas of my life - is critical to achieving my dream job." TD, Delaware

"This class helped to propel me forward into decision-making - not only for my life work, but many other aspects of my life." FC, New York

"The book Pathfinder by Nicholas Lore includes all the tools for discovering and creating a career you will love. The trick is putting in the time and effort necessary to take full advantage of them. The book discussion group led by Debra Exner provided me with a fun, highly motivating way to make sure I did just that. The regularly scheduled conference calls made the difference between just reading the book and really applying it in my life. If you are resigned about the difference that a book can actually make in your life, give this discussion group a try. It really works!" KD, Delaware

"This was an absolutely wonderful session! The book was fabulous! It was great to be able to discuss in a group and hear other perspectives. And Debbie was a wonderful facilitator - with a great ability to motivate, listen, and respect everyone!" KM, Maryland

"Thank you for your direction and encouragement. Pathfinders helped me confirm my thoughts about whom I wanted to work with and what I wanted to do." BB, Delaware

Group Coaching based on Now What? 90 Days to a New Life Direction

Dates: Dates and times will be adjusted to meet the needs of the group

Program includes two individual coaching sessions, 3 group calls/month for 4 months, book and workbook

Introductory Price: \$200/month for 4 months; Bring a Friend discount \$150/month each

Maximum: 8 participants

This program can help you get clear about what's next in your life, especially if you are:

- Re-entering the work world or seeking more satisfying work
- Considering your options after a major life transition
- Looking for fulfillment and meaning
- Wanting to discover what's next for you

The work between calls involves reading a chapter or two from the Now What book and completing exercises designed to uncover limiting beliefs, wisdom from your past and direction for your future. The individual coaching calls will help you to personalize the information and create your action plan.

Ready to take a big step towards a more satisfying life and work? To sign up, please contact me via email: info@exnerassociates.com or phone: 602-298-1129

Free sessions: A Taste of Now What

Tuesday 10/9 6:00-7:00 pm AZ Time/PDT; 9:00-10:00 pm EDT

See what this program can do for you. Now What is also available in individual coaching.

[Click on this link to register via a faxed form or call 602-298-1129](#)

If you are ready to make changes in your business and personal life or know someone who is, I'm looking for you. I work primarily with people in with self-directed individuals who want to maximize their effectiveness and satisfaction at work while maintaining a healthy life/work balance and with people in a life transition that has them thinking about what's next (i.e., the kids have grown, they want to partially retire, etc). Curious? Email me at DExner@ExnerAssociates.com or call 602-298-1129 to schedule a complimentary 45-minute coaching session.

If you are enjoying this newsletter, please forward it to your friends and colleagues! Or direct them to the subscription form and past issues at <http://exnerassociates.com/newsletter.htm>

Thanks,

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To live a creative life, we must lose our fear of being wrong.

